

APPROVED: Meeting No. 33-97

ATTEST: *Paula Jewell*

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
Meeting No. 20-97

May 5, 1997

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland convened in Worksession in the Council Chamber, Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, on May 5, 1997, at 7:34 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Rose G. Krasnow

Councilmember Robert E. Dorsey

Councilmember Glennon J. Harrison

Councilmember Robert J. Wright

ABSENT

Councilmember James T. Marrinan

In attendance: City Manager Rick Kuckkahn, City Clerk Paula Jewell and City Attorney Paul Glasgow. Also present were Deputy City Manager Julia Novak, Assistants to the City Manager Thomas E. Thomas and Michelle Martin, and Public Information Officer Rebecca Feaster.

Re: Worksession with the Board of
Supervisors of Elections (BSE)

The Mayor and Council met with the Board's Vice Chair, Margaretta Tutson and members Linda Aksamit, Dave Celeste and Howard Eskildson. City Clerk Paula Jewell serves as the Board's staff liaison. The following issues were discussed:

1. Deadline for filing as a candidate - The Board is recommending that the Charter be amended to change the deadline for filing from 45 days prior to City elections,

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to 60 days. Mr. Celeste explained the Board's rationale for recommending the earlier filing deadline. Under current law, there is only a 15-day window in which to certify candidate petitions and prepare and print regular and absentee ballots for the City's election. The Board feels that the amendment would allow staff additional time to prepare the ballots, especially the absentee ballots which must be available 30 days prior to the election. The Mayor and Council agreed with the Board's recommendation and directed staff to prepare a resolution amending the Charter for the May 27 General Session. The Public Hearing on the amendment will take place on June 2. If adopted, the new deadline for filing as a candidate will be September 5, 1997 instead of September 22, 1997.

2. Mayor and Council Term Limits - Mr. Celeste said that as a result of the Mayor and Council's request, the Board spent considerable time studying and discussing the issue of 4 year terms. The Board agreed that longer terms might increase voter turnouts in Rockville elections. The Board's recommendation was to lengthen the Mayor's term to 4 years and limit the number of terms that a Mayor can serve to two. The Board recommended that Councilmember terms should remain at two years, with no limit on the number of terms that a Councilmember can serve.

Ms. Tutson pointed out the materials distributed to the Mayor and Council which included information about the 1991 advisory questions regarding 4 year terms and term limitations. Ms. Tutson also noted the survey of Maryland cities and towns and the number of terms served by other elected officials.

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Mayor Krasnow said that she felt that both the Mayor and the Councilmember terms should be extended to 4 years. She said that term limits was not specifically an issue in the City of Rockville, or nationally. She noted that since 1954, twelve Rockville Mayors served consecutive terms. She also felt strongly that two year terms was a mistake, and it could be one of the deterrents that made people not interested in running for elected office. She said that she would favor putting the question of 4 year terms on the November ballot.

Councilmember Wright commented that he did not think the City needed term limits because all of the elected officials ran at-large, as compared to a ward or district system.

Councilmember Harrison commented on the City's very low election-day turnouts. He noted that Ft. Collins, Colorado used mail-in ballots for their elections, and he suggested that the Board look into innovative ways to encourage voter participation. Mr. Harrison noted that the City of Gaithersburg went to 4 year terms and he said that this did not necessarily increase voter turnout. However, he thought that 4 year terms were a good idea from the point of view of a candidate, although from a citizen point of view, he preferred 2 year terms.

Councilmember Dorsey said that as a candidate, he found the idea of 4 year terms more appealing because it was difficult to keep campaigning every two years. However, as a citizen, he liked the idea of 2 year terms.

The Mayor and Council agreed that the issue of 4 year terms should not be

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confused with the issue of term limits. The Mayor and Council and BSE members agreed that an advisory referendum should be placed on the November ballot on the question of 4 year terms for the Mayor and Councilmember seats. Mr. Celeste said that depending on the outcome of the advisory question, the issue should be dealt with immediately; unlike in 1991 when action wasn't taken on the issue of term limitations until two years later.

3. Board Vacancy - Mayor Krasnow noted that the Mayor and Council were aware of the Board's vacancy, they would try to help identify persons who might be interested in serving on the Board. The Worksession with the Board of Supervisors of Elections adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Re: Worksession with Traffic and
Transportation Commission.

The Mayor and Council met with Chairperson Herb Pennock and Commission members Alice Bell, John Borden, Dennis Cain, Stanley Klein, Alan Levine and Richard Resnick. Also present were Mark Chatfield (a candidate interested in serving on the Commission), and Traffic Engineer Joe Cutro (staff liaison to the Commission). The following matters were discussed:

1. Pedestrian Policies - A resolution adopting the Pedestrian Policies will be forthcoming to the Mayor and Council in July. There is a provision in the policies which would allow the City Manager to make modifications regarding snow removal from sidewalks.

2. CIP and Operating Budget items - The Commission reviewed the proposed FY98 CIP budget and noted of particular interest, the Great Falls Road project. They

asked that the Mayor and Council get the State Delegation's support for the project. The Commission looked at the Middle Lane sidewalk area and felt that 3-foot buffers were needed between the sidewalk and the curb. The Commission would also like to see traffic flow one way on that street; this was an issue that had been discussed by the neighborhood for some time. Mr. Cutro noted that staff was looking at some other considerations which won't negatively impact other streets because there was some concern that a one-way traffic pattern would shift traffic onto other streets.

3. Sidewalk Treatment along MD Route 355 - The Commission sent the Planning Commission a memo requesting that they reverse a decision to not require the King Farm developers to install a new sidewalk concept along the west side of Frederick Road, thus creating a safety buffer for pedestrians. In their 2/26/97 memo, the Traffic Commission proposed a short-term solution to make the sidewalk usable. Mr. Pennock said that had the Pedestrian Policies been in effect, the problem could have been avoided. The Planning Commission expressed an interest in meeting with the Traffic Commission to discuss the memo.

4. Montrose Parkway - The Community Development Department has been updating the Commission on this project. The Commission is looking at what the impacts would be if the parkway was not built. Mr. Klein commented that every major street in the City of Rockville would be impacted if the parkway was not built. The Mayor and Council expressed an interest in hearing the Commission's views on the proposed Inter-County Connector.

5. Sidewalk snow removal - The Commission thanked the Mayor and Council for being responsive to the issue and for adopting amendments to the Property Maintenance Code.

6. Visioning - In response to the Commission's request, Mayor Krasnow provided an update on the progress of the Visioning initiative. She said that Action Teams were holding their first meetings to develop steps for implementation goals and the City's boards and commissions would soon receive feedback.

7. Neighborhood Traffic Management - The Commission was asked to consider the applicability of speed humps on the City's Class I primary residential streets. The Commission continues to recommend that speed humps not be considered as an option for Class I primary streets. Mr. Pennock noted that Montgomery County was the only jurisdiction in the State of Maryland which used speed humps on Class I primary streets. The Commission felt that other features can be encouraged, e.g., median chokers. Mr. Pennock noted that funding for neighborhood traffic controls was \$20,000 and that additional funds would be needed to carry out the other ideas. Mayor Krasnow asked that staff continue to slowly phase-in speed humps.

The Mayor and Council discussed the issue of traffic at Route 28 and Maryland Avenue. Since there are no lane markings on the new part of Maryland Avenue, it is difficult to know whether cars are going straight or turning. Mayor Krasnow said that signage indicating that traffic must move to Middle Lane, might help. Mr. Cain suggested that a traffic island be installed. Staff was asked to develop some options for solving the problem.

The Worksession with the Traffic and Transportation Commission adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Re: Worksession Re: Bicycle Master
Plan Update - Presentation by
Bicycle Study Citizens
Committee Members and
Consultants

The Mayor and Council held a televised Worksession on the Bicycle Master Plan. Members of the Bicycle Study Citizens Committee who were present included Aileen Klein, Dirk Schenck, Alice Bell, Barry Klein and Bob Taylor. Consultants from The A & E Group were John Christian, Peter Moe and Scott Holden. Other members of the Recreation and Park Advisory Board, Traffic and Transportation Commission, and Planning Commission were also present. Ms. Klein presented the history of the project and stated the project's goal and vision statement. Recreation and Parks Director Burt Hall explained the planning process undertaken in the last year. Mr. Moe explained A & E's involvement, and Mr. Christian went over the details of the bikeway study and the plan.

Mr. Hall explained that the next step would be to seek input from the community. The City would be divided into three regions and public open houses would be held in each region over the next several months. Citizen comments would be incorporated into the final plan.

Mr. Schenck summarized the committee's recommendations:

- Adopt the plan as amended
- Mayor and Council to appoint a permanent Citizen Bicycle Advisory Committee to review projects for bike compatibility
- City to fund bike education programs
- Incorporate the plan's recommendations into the CIP

- Explore funding sources
- Implement on-road bike lane pilot projects
- Implement improvements to the bikeway maintenance program
- Print and update bikeway maps

Mayor Krasnow thanked everyone involved in the Bikeway Study Committee. She reiterated the information concerning upcoming public open houses and she said that the Bikeway Plan was available at City Hall. Many City streets were involved in the plan and Mayor Krasnow encouraged citizens and citizen associations to review it. (The televised portion of the Worksession concluded at 9:58 p.m.)

The Mayor and Council then discussed plans for incorporating citizen comment into the final plan. Councilmember Wright said that one of the great dilemmas with holding open houses was that not all of the people affected will be in attendance. Councilmember Harrison asked if it would be possible to list in Rockville Reports, all of the streets that are part of the bicycle plan. Mr. Hall suggested that the City might be able to place signs to indicate that particular streets are designated as part of the Bikeway Plan.

Councilmember Dorsey asked if there was a way to produce estimates of the maintenance costs for the suggested bikeway routes. Mr. Hall responded that some costs were included in the plan; however, others would have to be worked out.

Councilmember Harrison suggested that the word "Update" be stricken from the name of the plan since the original plan was never adopted. The Mayor and Council agreed with the suggestion.

Re: Adjournment to Executive
Session

Upon motion by Councilmember Wright, duly seconded and unanimously passed by a 4 to 0 vote (Councilmember Marrinan was absent), the Mayor and Council adjourned at 10:35 p.m., to reconvene immediately following in Executive Session pursuant to Section 10-508(a)(1)(ii) of the State Government Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, to consult with counsel to discuss a personnel matter.